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ABSTRACT

After completing a freshman course that provides instruction in basic skills and acquaints them with five members of the English staff, students at Orono High School, Maine, can select according to their interests from among 37 courses in diverse areas: folklore, film study, mythology, modern grammar, English literature, expository writing, and seminars in American literature, poetry, drama, philosophy, and the epic. Classified under one of five "phases" of difficulty, the courses range from those designed for students who have much difficulty with basic language skills to those for students who have excellent control of basic skills and are looking for stimulating learning experiences. Some courses are multiphased. During the program's brief existence, reaction among students has been encouraging. Obvious advantages of the program are its built-in flexibility, active student participation in curriculum development, and increased student and teacher interest in the subject matter. (Appendices provide individual descriptions of the 37 courses taught in the program, and a master list of courses indicating phase levels for each.) (LH)

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ORONO HIGH SCHOOL'S PHASE-ELECTIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

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Orono High School is a small school which has a student body of 400 and an English staff of 6 teachers, each teaching 4 periods a day. The staff, investigating students' comments which reflected a belief that the curriculum was out of touch with modern American life, found that students were bored by such traditional offerings as literature surveys, a study of genre, and even by varied thematic approaches to literature and the problems of mankind. From the students' point of view, even in spite of creative teachers, audio-visual aids, large and small group lectures and discussions, and a team teaching establishment, the material under consideration most of the time was neither important nor very relevant. And, indeed, the curriculum with its stratified, three-tracked format was an archaic remnant of some ancient hierarchy wherein those who could "grind" and pass tests were considered "college material" while all others were written off as "C division," "Track two," or "Lower group" students. A need for change in Orono High School was evident.

The faculty, convinced that the old curriculum was something short of the best of all possible curricula and that their own talents and special areas of interest were being slighted or ignored, studied the Trenton, Michigan, APEX Program, an elective English program for a large school which has been successful for the four years of its existence. Although Orono has a high school only one-fifth as large as Trenton's and is a less wealthy community, the Orono English staff has been able to adapt the APEX concept of elective courses at designated phase levels to its own situation. Courses in folklore, film study, mythology, modern grammar, English literature, and expository writing and seminars in American literature, poetry, drama, philosophy, and the epic - these are some of the individual offerings in Orono High School's new, nongraded, elective English program.

In April of 1969, it was decided that a phase-elective program for sophomores, juniors, and seniors, based on a solid foundation of freshman course work which contains a review of skills, work on composition, and an orientation for the elective program to be pursued in grades 10-12, would be offered. Each teacher was asked to write phased descriptions of courses he would like to teach the following year, each course to emphasize reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking and to be open to each sophomore, junior, and senior. Each student could then elect a course according to his area of interest and his own assessment of his ability.

Descriptions of thirty-seven courses were prepared (Appendix A). A student made four selections according to preference. The English Chairman then made up a master schedule which took into account one of these individual preferences. Thus, student interest determined the courses which were to be offered in the fall.

It should be noted that it is the courses that are phased, not the students. Phasing is the classification of courses according to difficulty, complexity of skills and materials, and relative sophistication. To develop courses and to assist in guidance, the following definitions are used:

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PHASE I These courses are designed for students who find reading, writing, speaking and critical thinking quite difficult and have problems with basic skills.

PHASE 2 These courses are created for students who do not have serious difficulty with basic skills but do need to improve and refine them and can do so by learning at a somewhat slower pace.

PHASE 3 These courses are particularly for those who have an average command of the basic language skills and would like to advance beyond these basic skills but at a moderate rather than an accelerated pace.

PHASE 4 These courses are for students who learn fairly rapidly and have a good command of the basic language skills.

PHASE 5 These courses offer a challenge to students who have excellent control of basic skills and are looking for stimulating academic learning experiences.

Some courses are multi-phased, and it is hoped that students will elect courses in different phase levels over a period of time. This phasing provides the student with challenging educational experiences, because he is learning at the level commensurate with his ability and degree of sophistication. This nongraded, organizational structure, then, provides a realistic learning sequence; for a student, with guidance, can make a course selection based on his "readiness" for it. Motivation to achieve in this nongraded structure is greater than in the previous structure which was based on grade-level promotion.

Freshmen do not take these elective courses, but they do have an opportunity to become acquainted with the different personalities on the staff and their varied approaches to subject matter. The 100 freshmen are divided alphabetically into five groups which are scheduled into English classes during the same period each day. An English teacher is assigned to each group as a base teacher. This base teacher meets with his group for 5 days a week during the first quarter of the year to teach vocabulary, spelling, and word awareness on Monday, literature on Tuesday and Wednesday, and language usage and composition on Thursday and Friday. For the other three quarters, he meets all 5 groups on a rotating schedule to offer a unit of six weeks duration which can be taught during two or three days per week. He returns regularly to his own base group for the remaining time.

The units offered to all freshman groups by a base teacher include poetry, drama, short stories, non-fiction, and a novel. As the literary type under consideration changes, the teacher rotates. During the three quarters of this rotating schedule, each base teacher is meeting with his own group for two days per week and at other times to offer short units covering such topics as logic and critical thinking. At the same time that the freshman develops a feeling of security from identification with his own teacher, he also meets four others on the English staff. In turn, the English staff is meeting all freshmen. Therefore, the English teacher, serving for three years as a homeroom teacher for the same base group, is prepared to act as an English guidance counsellor for this base group and to assist other students when the need arises.

The sixth member of the English staff has been freed during the freshman

English period to provide remedial help for students identified as having reading and comprehension handicaps. Since remedial skills classes are small, no more than five members, the teacher has a chance to provide the kind of remedial instruction and special attention each of these "special" students needs.

English scheduling for the upperclass students took place after the students had scheduled all of their other courses. In June these students gave the chairman of the English department their course schedules and their 4 selections from the course descriptions. On the basis of these selections, the English chairman drew up a master list (Appendix B) and prepared a master schedule. It became evident from students' selections that while some courses would have to be dropped because of lack of interest, others would have to be sectioned because of the large number of registrants. It is interesting to note that folklore, a new course, attracted nearly 100 students and had to be divided into three sections; that over 80 students enrolled in expository writing, a very traditional course, and necessitated the formation of four separate groups; that 60 students selected the American literature seminar and thus formed three divisions; and that a demand of over 40 resulted in two sections of Short Story I. Six staff members teaching three periods a day for four quarters are able to meet the demands for most of the courses selected.

Some changes in the master list, however, had to be made, so that a group enrolled would be sufficiently large to warrant assigning a staff member to it. In many instances, similarities in courses made modification of a student's schedule relatively easy. For example, the students presently taking the poetry seminar will be dealing with "Man and the World" during the second quarter of the year. In other instances, courses were combined. The course Contemporary English, for instance, is a combination of three courses: contemporary English, basic reading skills, and business English. In this combination course the fundamentals of language and communication study are emphasized, thus serving the needs of ten students who have neither severe reading problems, the emphasis intended for the course basic reading skills, nor serious weaknesses in mechanics, an emphasis intended for the formal course business English. Such changes in the master schedule have strengthened the elective program rather than weakened it.

The new Orono program will have to wait another year or two for a thorough evaluation, but the early observable reactions of students to what is happening have been encouraging. About 10 percent of the student body is now taking more than one English course. Their willingness to sacrifice a study period for an additional academic responsibility, and one in English, no less, seems to indicate that this, indeed, is a direction they want us to take.

One of the major advantages of the program is its built-in flexibility. Students feel free to suggest possible courses. It seems now that there are some courses which will not need to be offered each year or each semester. The journalism course and the course on the school newspaper, for example, seem headed for a merger, a move which will strengthen both. Other courses, however, will be in constant demand and will become regular offerings, if the requests now being received to repeat them are an indication of future interest.

Teachers in this program are continually evaluating their own accomplishments and making suggestions for improvements for another year. Some thought is now being given to the possibility of devising a series of nine-week courses in specific areas. The present school schedule, however, will have to become more flexible and more space will have to become available before such a change can be made a very substantital aspect of this program. Students are active and interested in a way they have not been before in their classes. Therefore, since what the English department is learning about student interests and attitudes seems pertinent for other departments, perhaps the total school structure will become more flexible and thus offer an opportunity to expand all programs.

Appendix A
Thirty-Seven Course Descriptions Submitted in April,1969

A NEW ORONO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH PROGRAM

The following pages contain descriptions of the courses from which students will select their English program for the school year 1969-1970. Any sophomore, junior or senior may elect any of these courses, keeping in mind the fact that he must have at least two semester or four quarter courses to make up the full year's work. After all students have registered and the schedule is completed, those who desire to take more than one course each semester may register for additional courses in those in which there is room.

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1 (111) FUNDAMENTAL ENGLISH is a course which explores modern social problems and values while helping you on an individual basis to improve your everyday skills in writing, reading, speaking, thinking and listening. Books like those in the Impact Series, Vanguard, War of the Worlds and films, filmstrips, television performances and individualized reading programs will be used. The emphasis will be on work in small groups and working by one's self.

1 (112) VOCATIONAL ENGLISH is a course to help you prepare for jobs and for life on your own. It aims to help you equip yourself with the basic reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening skills which are needed to get, keep, and advance in the job you select. The course is set up to help you with the weaknesses you feel you might have, while exploring in depth jobs you might be interested in. This course is also designed to help you prepare for life on your own. It deals with such common areas as money problems, working with other people, and problem solving,both in groups and individually. Texts and approaches to problems will vary, depending on the needs of the individuals in the class.

1-2 (121) CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH is for students who want to listen to records, watch television, view movies, talk with friends and employers, and read about what's going on -- who want to do all of these somewhat better and with more skill and insight than they now possess. The method of improving these skills will be practice -- through making recordings, movies, real conversations and stories that really say something about what is here and now and happening. Materials will vary, depending on the students and their interests. The creation of personal expression and discovery of self will be a primary goal.

1-2 (122) BASIC READING SKILLS is an individualized course to help you read with less difficulty. You will build vocabulary skills and develop your reading ability by improving speed and understanding. You will also be introduced to methods of studying assignments and improving your listening habits. Materials to be used will include the EDL Controlled Reader with filmstrips, SRA Reading Laboratory, EDL Listening Program with tapes, Scope, Tactics in Reading, and a wide

variety of books and magazines. Textbooks from your other courses will also be used as you improve in reading.

1-3 (131) SEMINAR IN NEW DIMENSIONS is a course designed to explore frontier developments in any aspect of man's existence. Most of the time will be spent in searching out, discussing, and evaluating the very latest discoveries:from rapid transit, oceanography, and packaged houses to artificial grass, paper clothing, and bread flour made from sea scum. The course will involve visits to areas where new developments are taking place: exhibitions of these concepts, techniques, ideas, or products will be developed by the students themselves. Materials for the course will include numerous magazines and the use of the library for in-depth research. Each student will engage in four major projects: a survey project, a depth study, a magazine project, and a creative experiment.

1-3 (132) THEATER ARTS is a course in which you will learn by doing. You will participate in cooperating with other students in the presentation of a full length play. You will observe professional actors on stage, in films, and on television and will evaluate them. You will write and deliver monologues and dialogues and perform scenes from other plays. Your voice and physical control of the senses of observation and imitation and theatric abilities will be developed. This will be a student-oriented course with the teacher, after the first few weeks, acting mainly as an advisor. Texts will include T.V. Plays, Modern American Drama, Six Great Plays, Our Town, Shakespeare, and others. Trips to local movies and plays (at student expense) and to local television stations will be included.

1-5 (151) INDEPENDENT STUDY is a program of study designed for students who are interested in learning on their own and in their own way. Any student who is interested in becoming involved with a special learning project dealing with the language arts may enroll. Before being accepted into this program, the student must file a description of the project he intends to investigate, secure the permission of the instructor, and sign a contract binding him to the completion of that project during the semester. Because of the unusual amount of unsupervised time associated with independent study, students must be capable of extensive self-discipline.

1-5 (152) HUMANITIES is a course designed to increase your understanding of modern Western man as he expresses himself in art, literature, and music. By forming analogies in these fields, you will discover that certain basic issues arise repeatedly. In examining and understanding the various approaches to these issues, you can gain insight into yourself and the issues confronting you today. For materials, you will be studying selections from art, literature, and music. You will be expected to form original analogies and relate personally to the values expressed. Your major project will be to represent an idea in two different art forms or to trace an idea through three art forms.

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2-3 (231) ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL is a course dealing with long stories about all kinds of people making all kinds of decisions under all kinds of circumstances. Dr. Martin Arrowsmith tries to decide whether he should spend his life in a laboratory or out in the community healing the sick. Sidney Carton has to decide between life and death for himself and for his rival. What would it be like to live during the French Revolution or after the Third World War? In this course we will try to read as many novels as we can. Detective and science fiction will be included in the selections.

2-3 (232) AMERICAN LITERATURE SURVEY is devoted to acquainting the student with the major works and trends in his own literature. In the first quarter we will concentrate upon the American short story, handled developmentally. Selected American poetry and essays will be "salted in" with the stories. In the second quarter we will turn our attention to longer works, concentrating on American plays and two novels, Billy Budd or Grapes of Wrath or Faulkner's novels.

2-3 (233) INDIVIDUALIZED READING is a course in concentrated reading. There are two basic aims: 1. establishing a wider reading background, 2. evaluating and improving basic reading skills. A pacer will be used; vocabulary building and paragraph comprehension will also be stressed. Much individual work will be done. The emphasis is upon the individual and his specific difficulties.

2-3 (234) SHORT STORY I is a course in which you will be studying the short story as a literary form. In comprehending the stories you read, you will discover how such elements as setting, characterization, and point of view are used by authors to create various effects. You will also develop critical reading skills so that you can form substantial evaluations of the stories you read. As the semester progresses, you will read some short novels, including science fiction and detective stories.

2-4 (241) BUSINESS ENGLISH is designed for those students who plan to attend a one-or two-year post-secondary school or who plan to seek employment directly after graduation. Fundamentals of English usage, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure will be reviewed. Letter writing and some report writing for various business situations will be investigated. Since business forms have become a vital component of our way of life, the filling out and preparation of these will be studied. Business interviews, conversational techniques, direction following and clear thinking will be investigated. Some texts will include Warriner's Grammar, Scope, and spelling and vocabulary skills books.

2-4 (242) JOURNALISM is designed for those students who desire an insight into the newspaper and the fields of advertising, photo-journalism and art. They will explore the printing process and the actual make-up of a newspaper. Organization, management and public relations will be considered as vital components of a modern newspaper. The ability to think quickly, to understand people, and to work hard will be essential in this course. Several assignments in library readings and several newspapers will make up the formal reading. Much writing for journalistic publication will be required.

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2-4 (243) ORAL COMMUNICATION is designed to make students aware of effective speaking habits and to help them become more at ease in oral communication. In the first quarter we will deal with proper methods of writing and delivering interesting and effective speeches and making proper introductions for fellow speakers. Such speaking problems as acceptances (of awards, honors) and response to toasts and dedications will be discussed. In the second quarter we will place emphasis on the oral interpretation of speeches, plays, prose and verse written by established authors. An oral interpretation program which will be student-directed is the major project of this second quarter.

2-4 (244) SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE I is offered for those who desire an understanding of the development of English literature and thought through a study of several works from various periods. This semester will trace the language from its historical origins through the first two decades of the 17th century. The basic text is England in Literature.

2-4 (245) LITERATURE OF THE MINORITIES will examine the products of writers in America who are Negro, Jewish, Indian, or other minority writers. A major objective of the course will be to ascertain just what these writers feel about life in the "Land of Opportunity." An increased understanding of the problems of the often neglected in our culture as well as an awareness of the high quality of some of their writing will be other major aims of this course.

2-4 (246) SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE II continues where 244 leaves off. Here the development of the language and its great writers from 1620 to 1900 will be examined. England in Literature will be the basic text. Emphasis will be placed on reacting to the styles and ideas of the major authors and to the attitudes in the major periods.

2-4 (247) FOLKLORE will explore legends, ghosts, homecures, superstitions, and numerous other elements of American folklore. There will be a great deal of emphasis on oral exchange in class, and much of the homework will involve gathering examples of the current topic. The main project for the semester will be a paper dealing with some phase of folklore.

2-5 (251) MODERN GRAMMAR will explore generative grammar, a new method of describing our language. The linguist's techniques will be investigated and evaluated. The only really English grammar forms the major area of emphasis of this course. It is assumed that students enrolled here will recognize that they know how to communicate in English. The purpose of this study will be to ascertain how this is done.

2-5 (252) NON-FICTION will study most of the important interpretive literature of our time. Essays and reports, biographies and travel

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books, and "how-to-do-its'" are exciting because they deal with real people and real things and speculation about reality. How did people come to the Americas? Read Kon Tiki. What was John Kennedy really like? Ask William Manchester. What will the world be like in the future? Consult Arthur C. Clarke. Not all the books we would like to have can be included in the in-class reading; consequently, much of the reading will be done in the library to provide stimulating class discussion.

3-5 (351) EXPOSITORY WRITING will help you learn to write really readable and enjoyable essays and to write reports in science, history, and other fields. We will emphasize the organization of material and clear and interesting writing.

3-5 (352) MYTHOLOGY is designed to provide you with a strong mythological base. Prime emphasis will be upon the development of myth among all primitive men, revealed in Middle Eastern and Northern mythology and especially in Classical mythology. A brief survey of world mythology and a comparative study of the types of myth included in each area will be considered.

3-5 (353) CREATIVE WRITING is for the student who has something to say about himself, his environment, and his ideas. The objective is to make the student more sophisticated in his use of literary tools and to sharpen his insight into the nature of his thoughts and style. Segments will be devoted to "creative seeing"-- observation of the world and the individuals who move in it and the manner in which observations, images, and ideas are interwoven to form the fabric of creative expression. Selected readings from the library will be assigned. A major project, chosen by the student, will be completed.

3-5 (354) THE LITERATURE OF SOCIAL CRITICISM will study an aspect of literature which has been an important part of our lives for many generations. Sometimes this type of literature is sneeringly called propoganda and is despised for its lack of emphasis on craftsmanship and universality and for its preoccupation with temporary problems. However, the best of propoganda literature survives beside the best of interpretive literature simply because many of the social problems with which these writers have been concerned are not the problems of a particular society at a particular time, but of all societies at all times. Each student will be expected to produce one piece of creative criticism in any form he may select. Texts will include Swift's A Modest Proposal, Thoreau's "Essay on Civil Disobedience," Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath, and Baldwin's The Fire Next Time.

3-5 (355) SHAKESPEARE will examine how the man's genius manifests itself in his poetry, the universality of his themes, his depth of understanding of people, and his ability as a story teller. These are the major topics which will be studied in this course. Discussion will be based on extensive reading of plays representing the four phases of Shakespere's career. Shakespeare's theatrical techniques will also be examined and certain scenes will be acted out on stage.

3-5 (356) FILM STUDY is designed for those interested in examining the art and production of motion pictures. The students should be sensitive to an artist's uses of symbolism, characterization, drama and humor. He should be interested in making and editing films and sound tracks and in critizing those made by himself and by others. Students will be expected to view, criticize, improve, devise, reconstruct, and create. Ingenuity is essential as is self-discipline and patience. Films and study guides will be studied and written. Much library research will be conducted. Student-prepared films, sound tracks and still and live photography will all aim at exact creative expression in a media-conscious society.

3-5 (357) DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA is a survey course designed for the student who is interested in drama and its development, both as a literary technique and as an expression of life. Greek and Roman theatre, miracle and morality plays, church drama, stage development, naturalism, realism and expressionism are among the topics which will be studied.

4-5 (451) POETRY is designed to give each student a real understanding of how it feels to be a poet and to take a very thorough look at poetry as a means of expression. It will not be easy, but it will be rewarding. Text: Perrine, Sound and Sense.

4-5 (452) LANGUAGE IN THOUGHT AND ACTION searches for answers to such questions as, Do you really say what you mean? Do you really mean what you say? What is the relationship between word and thought, between word and action? In this study of semantics you will be helped in thinking about the way you think. You will also gain an insight into the words and thoughts of others. Text: Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action.

4-5 (453) AMERICAN LITERATURE SEMINARS will operate on a strictly seminar basis. Some of the topics likely to be selected as a focus for the semester might be:

1. Transcendentalism
2. The development of the American novel
3. The American short story (its development as a form)
4. Three major American writers: Steinbeck, Hemingway, Faulkner
5. The new American poetry (since 1912)
6. Realism and naturalism in American Literature
7. Contemporary American fiction
8. Literary criticism in America
9. Survey and analysis of American literary magazines
10. Nobel Prize winning American authors

4-5 (454) EPIC is designed to familiarize the student with the basic epic literature of our world heritage. We will examine the basal qualities of an epic and the societies which they reflect. Emphasis will be upon the Greek Iliad and Odyssey; the Latin Aeneid; the Old English Beowulf; the German Nibelungenlied and the Medieval Song of Roland and Morte D'Arthur. This is a survey of the earliest literature of our Western world, its construction, themes and style.

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4-5 (455) SEMINARS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE will deal with major figures in the development of the literature and language of England. Major works will receive intensive treatment as major authors' ideas are carefully examined. The impact of history on literature will be examined in each seminar.
1. Beowulf - Chaucer (from Old English to the Elizabethians)
2. Spenser - Donne (The Age of Elizabeth)
3. 1640 - 1750 (Milton, Restoration, and the Age of Reason)
4. Burns - Kipling (The Romantics and Victorians)

4-5 (456) SHORT STORY II will deal with much of the serious literature of our century. Here you will deal with all types of short stories: psychological, sociological, and philosophical. If these categories sound too pedantic to be meaningful, ask yourself the following questions: What am I really like? What should I do about poverty in Appalachia? Who and what am I?

5 (551) MAN IN THE WORLD will look at the questions Who am I? What is man? These questions have been the subject of interpretive literature for many centuries. This course is designed to help you understand the present by taking a look at the past. The texts used will be the Greek plays from the fifth century B. C., King Lear from the sixteenth century, and Moby Dick from the 19th century. This is a course for students who like to think and to discuss ideas.

5 (552) THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOVEL looks at the form which began in the 17th century with Pamela and Tom Jones and has remained a favorite of the public ever since. This course is designed for students who like to read novels and who are interested in discussing the changes between the 17th and the 20th century novels. Some of the texts will be: Vanity Fair, Return of the Native, Lord Jim, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

5 (553) 20th CENTURY DRAMA SEMINAR explores selected 20th century plays and playwrights from various countries and compares themes background influences, and effectiveness of the numerous dramatic techniques employed by the authors. There is also an opportunity to work with oral interpretation in this course.

5 (554) PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EAST AND WEST is designed to concentrate upon the philosophical centers of meaning in East and West as reflected in selected works of these respective cultures. It is a seminar course featuring several teachers and as many outside specialists as we can obtain. Areas of reading and discussion will be:
1. Philosophical questions
2. Early Western thought (Plato, et al.)
3. Modern European works (French, Russian, German, Northern, etc.)
4. Introduction to Eastern thought (Japan, China, India)
5. Some kind of in-depth comparison as a culminating project.

APPENDIX B

Master List of Elective Courses for Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors

PHASE LEVEL	COURSE TITLE
2-3	American Literature Survey through a consideration of the literature of minority groups
5	Seminar in Poetry and Man and the World
2-3	Aspects of the Novel
4-5	Seminar in American Literature (3 sections)
3-5	Mythology
4-5	Epic
3-5	Creative Writing
5	Philosophical Foundations of Literature
2-4	Literature of Social Criticism
2-5	Folklore (3 sections)
2-5	Expository Writing (4 sections)
4-5	Short Story II (2 sections)
2-4	English Literature Survey
2-4	Nonfiction
2-4	Journalism
3-4	Modern Grammar
1-2	Contemporary English
3-4	Film Study
1-3	Theater Arts
1	Basic Reading Skills
2-3	Short Story I
5	Drama Seminar
2-4	Business English (2 sections)
3-4	Shakespeare
2-4	Oral Communication

There is an "add-drop" period of about ten days during which time a student who realizes that he is not in a suitable course can switch to another one. (Specific course descriptions, both of these electives and of the freshman program material, are available upon request from the Orono English team.)